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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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NEA: AMBASSADOR MEYER
D - MVCONNORS
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R 112117 Z MAY 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090474

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN, BF
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALKS WITH PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SULTAN KHAN CALLED AT HIS REQUEST ON DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH MAY 9 TO (A) ELICIT LATTER' S VIEWS ON SOUTH ASIA IN AFTERMATH RECENT TRIP AND (B) DISCUSS PAKISTAN' S REACTION TO CURRENT STATE- OF- PLAY RE INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION. SULTAN KHAN REVEALED GROWING PAKISTANI DISQUIET AS RESULT INDIAN SILENCE ON PROPOSAL BY ISLAMABAD THAT REPRESENTATIVES MEET TO DISCUSS. END SUMMARY.

2. DEPUTY SECRETARY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR RECEPTION HE AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO RECEIVED IN PAKISTAN. HE
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NOTED THAT PAKISTANI PRESIDENT IS MAN OF CLEARLY " EXTRA-ORDINARY CAPACITY".

3. SULTAN KHAN ASKED ABOUT TRIP AS MATTER OF COURTESY FOR HE PROMPTLY TURNED TO JOINT/ DECLARATION. AFTER NOTING HIS OWN INITIAL IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS " HOPEFUL" DEVELOPMENT, HE EXPRESSED VIEW IT MAY WELL BE PRIMARILY PROPAGANDISTIC EFFORT. IT CLEAR, HE SAID, INDIANS HAVE GROWN VERY UN-COMFORTABLE IN FACE OF MOUNTING WORLD OPINION FAVORING RELEASE OF POWS. JOINT DECLARATION ALLOWS THEM TO ASSERT THEY PREPARED RESOLVE MATTER WHILE KNOWING THAT PAKISTANI INABILITY ACCEPT WAR CRIMES TRIALS BY BANGLADESH AND

ABSORB 260,000 BIHARIS IN ACTUALITY REDUCES NEED FOR ACTION. SULTAN KHAN SAID PAKISTAN NEVERTHELESS CONTINUES TO SEE POSSIBILITIES IN JOINT DECLARATION AND AWAITS INDIAN RESPONSE TO INVITATION SEND OFFICIALS TO ISLAMABAD TO BEGIN DISCUSSION.

4. DEPUTY SECRETARY NOTED THAT HE HAD SEEN BANGLADESH SPECIAL EMISSARY SIDDIQUI ON MAY 8 AND HAD POINTED OUT THAT WHILE U. S. ANXIOUS SEE OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN SOUTH ASIA RESOLVED, WE DO NOT INTEND SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN PARTIES NOR WILL WE INTERPOSE OR INTERJECT SELVES. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD REMINDED SIDDIQUI THAT WAR CRIMES TRIALS BOUND TO POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS. PAKISTANIS SURE TO HAVE DIMINISHED WILLINGNESS ENTER INTO MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS SINCE PAKISTANI DOMESTIC OPINION WILL OPPOSE. AND, IN BANGLADESH, REVITALIZATION OF PAINFUL MEMORIES WILL REDUCE BDG' S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE MANY OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN MUST SOLVE.

5. SULTAN KHAN SOUGHT DEPUTY SECRETARY' S THOUGHTS RE-GARDING INDIAN SILENCE RE PAKISTANI INVITATION. DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID THAT GIVEN SCOPE FOR FLEXIBILITY WHICH EXISTS IN SOUTH ASIA (HE CONTRASTED INTRASIGENCE WHICH MARKS NEAR EAST), SILENCE IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. WHILE IT POSSIBLE THEORIZE THAT JOINT DECLARATION WAS PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO WHICH INDIANS DID NOT EXPECT MEANING-FUL PAKISTANI RESPONSE, IT WOULD SEEM MORE LIKELY THAT DELAY MAY REFLECT TIME REQUIRED BY INDIA AND BANGLADESH
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TO SORT OUT METHOD BY WHICH THEY WILL HANDLE PAKISTANI RESPONSE. DEPUTY SECRETARY THEN ALLUDED TO RECENT ROUND-UP OF BENGALEES IN PAKISTAN WHICH CONVERSATION WITH SIDDIQUI REVEALED TO HAVE TROUBLED BANGLADESH DEEPLY.

6. SULTAN KHAN SAID WHILE ROUND- UP UNFORTUATE, IT NECESSARY STEP IN FACE STEADY OUTFLOW OF BENGALEES.

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PAKISTANI AMBASSADOR SAID IT IMPERATIVE PAKISTAN MAINTAIN AS MUCH LEVERAGE AS POSSIBLE FOR DEALINGS WITH INDIA AND BANGLADESH. HE SAID PAKISTAN AWARE THAT MANY OF BENGALEES IN PAKISTAN HAD COMMITTED ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND TREASON AGAINST PAKISTAN, AND THUS LIABLE TO TRIAL. PAKISTAN WOULD PREFER NOT HOLD SUCH TRIALS BUT POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE ABANDONED AS LONG AS BANGLADESH PROPOSES HOLD WAR CRIMES TRIAL- SULTAN KHAN THEN SOUGHT SOFTEN COMMENTS BY NOTING THAT THOSE NOW HELD NUMBER ONLY " FEW HUNDRED." (IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICER, SULTAN KHAN REFERRED TO TIMING OF ROUND- UP AS " BONUS" FOR SIDDIQUI VISIT).

7. AFTER FINAL EXCHANGE ABOUT ABILITY INDIA OBTAIN BETTER PRESS AND BUILD SYMPATHY ON REPORTS OF FOOD SHORTAGE, DEPUTY SECRETARY SAID HE CONCLUDES THAT WAR CRIMES TRIALS REMAIN CHIEF IMPEDIMENT TO SIMLA PROCESS AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ISSUE OF BIHARIS MIGHT LEND ITSELF TO COM- PROMISE. SULTAN KHAN AGAIN NOTED THE HEAVY BURDEN WHICH THEY WOULD POSE, ASKING RHETORICALLY HOW PAKISTAN COULD AFFORD TO MOVE AND RESETTLE YET ANOTHER GROUP OF REFUGEES. DEPUTY SECRETARY REMARKED THERE MUST BE SOME GIVE REGARDING BIHARIS. SULTAN KHAN SAID, MAYBE SOME GIVE BUT " NOT FOR A QUARTER MILLION." ROGERS

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